

Message Text

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R 130254Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1337

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 1238

E.O. 11651, GDS

TAGS: PFOR BM VN

SUBJ: VISIT OF NVN DPM AND FOREIGN MINISTER

1. SUMMARY: RECENT THREE DAY VISIT OF NVN DPM AND FOREIGN MINISTER NGUYEN VAN LINH TO BURMA APPARENTLY WENT WELL, ALTHOUGH IT CONCLUDED APRIL 10 WITHOUT ANNOUNCED RESULT. WHILE TRADE, PARTICULARLY PURCHASE OF BURMESE RICE, MAY HAVE BEEN ONE ISSUE DISCUSSED, THERE IS SPECULATION THAT PURPOSE OF VISIT FROM NVN POINT OF VIEW WAS TO DEVELOP CLOSER COOPERATION IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS FIELD. AS GUB AND NVN TAKE SIMILAR POSITIONS ON SOME ISSUES, COOPERATION MAY IN FACT DEVELOP IN MONTHS AHEAD. END SUMMARY.

2. VISIT TO BURMA OF NORTH VIETNAMESE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER NGUYEN VAN LINH, GOT OFF TO GOOD START APRIL 7 WHEN VAN LINH, IN HIS ARRIVAL STATEMENT, INCLUDED REFERENCE TO MUTUAL SUPPORT OF NVN AND GUB IN THEIR STRUGGLES FOR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE. THIS WAS SORE POINT WITH GUB BECAUSE NVN HAD EARLIER CLASSIFIED BURMA WITH THOSE POWERS WHICH HAD DONE NOTHING TO SUPPORT NORTH VIETNAMESE DURING VIETNAM WAR; GUB WAS THEREFORE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN SUCH MATTERS AS ACQUIRING EMBASSY OFFICE SPACE IN HANOI.

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3. WHILE IT IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR WHAT SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES WERE

DISCUSSED DURING VISIT, ONE ITEM WAS REPORTEDLY NORTH VIETNAMESE
INTEREST IN PURCHASING BURMESE RICE. AS GUB HAS BEEN HAVING
DIFFICULTY EXPORTING THIS YEAR'S CROP, THIS INTEREST WELCOME.
WHAT NORTH VIETNAMESE WOULD OFFER IN RETURN IS LESS CLEAR, ALTHOUGH
THERE IS SOME TALK OF COAL AND TEXTILES.

4. MORE INTERESTING IS SPECULATION THAT NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE
INTERESTED IN EXPLORING POSSIBILITY OF CLOSER COOPERATION IN
FOREIGN AFFAIRS FIELD. GUB AND NVN FOREIGN POLICIES HAVE MUCH IN
COMMON, PARTICULARLY ON ISSUES TOUCHING NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND
SOVEREIGNTY AS WELL AS DETERMINATION TO KEEP GREAT POWER INFLUENCE
OUT OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. NVN AND BURMESE POSITIONS ON RELATED ISSUES
SUCH AS ASEAN (WHICH BOTH REGARD AS POSSIBLE VEHICLE OF GREAT
POWER INFLUENCE) ARE QUITE CLEAR.

5. GUB TOO, MIGHT SEE ADVANTAGE IN DEVELOPING CLOSER RELATIONSHIP
WITH NVN. NVN IS NOT THREAT TO BURMA THAT IT IS TO THAILAND, AND
SO THERE IS NO OBSTACLE FROM THAT DIRECTION. THERE IS, HOWEVER,
POSSIBILITY, EVER PRESENT IN BURMESE MINDS, THAT AMERICAN WEAPONRY
LEFT OVER FROM INDOCHINA CONFLICT MIGHT BE PASSED BY NORTH VIET-
NAMESE TO BURMA COMMUNIST PARTY (BSP) INSURGENTS. DEVELOPMENTS OF
CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH NORTH VIETNAM MIGHT REDUCE POSSIBILITY OF
THIS HAPPENING, AND MIGHT EVEN BE MADE CONDITION FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COOPERATION.

6. ANOTHER ADVANTAGE TO CLOSER COOPERATION FROM GUB STANDPOINT IS
THAT BEING IN FAVOR WITH NORTH VIETNAM WOULD HELP GUB IN ITS DRIVE
FOR ACCEPTANCE BY COMMUNIST STATES AS SOCIALIST COUNTRY. IT WOULD
ALSO FACILITATE ACCEPTANCE OF RELATED GUB DESIRE TO HAVE BURMA'S
SOLE POLITICAL PARTY, BURMA SOCIALIST PROGRAM PARTY, RECOGNIZED AS
FELLOW PARTY BY COMMUNIST PARTIES IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

7. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT GUB/NVN FOREIGN AFFAIRS COOPERATION,
IF IT MATERIALIZES IS LIKELY TO BE UNSTRUCTURED AND INFORMAL.
WHILE IT DIFFICULT TO PINPOINT ANY ISSUES AGAINST WHICH POSSIBLE
GUB/NVN COOPERATION COULD BE TESTED, NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE AT
COLOMBO IN AUGUST, AND NEXT UNGA WOULD BE OBVIOUS VENUES WHERE
EVIDENCE OF SUCH COOPERATION COULD COME TO LIGHT.

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